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The MSDS is a detailed information bulletin prepared by the manufacturer or importer of a chemical that describes the physical and chemical properties, physical and health hazards, routes of exposure, precautions for safe handling and use, emergency and first-aid procedures, and control measures.

Chemical manufacturers and importers must develop an MSDS for each hazardous chemical they produce or import, and must provide the MSDS automatically at the time of the initial shipment of a hazardous chemical to a downstream distributor or user. Distributors also must ensure that downstream employers are similarly provided an MSDS.

Each MSDS must be in English and include information regarding the specific chemical identity of the hazardous chemical(s) involved and the common names. In addition, information must be provided on the physical and chemical characteristics of the hazardous chemical; known acute and chronic health effects and related health information; exposure limits; whether the chemical is considered to be a carcinogen by NTP, IARC, or OSHA; precautionary measures; emergency and first-aid procedures; and the identification (name, address, and telephone number) of the organization responsible for preparing the sheet.

Copies of the MSDS for hazardous chemicals in a given worksite are to be readily accessible to employees in that area. As a source of detailed information on hazards, they must be readily available to workers during each workshift. MSDSs have no prescribed format. ANSI standard no. Z400.1—*Material Safety Data Sheet Preparation*—may be used. The non-mandatory MSDS form (OSHA 174) also may be used as a guide and a copy can be obtained from OSHA field offices.

Employers must prepare a list of all hazardous chemicals in the workplace. When the list is complete, it should be checked against the collected MSDSs that the employer has been sent.

If there are hazardous chemicals used for which no MSDS has been received, the employer must contact the supplier, manufacturer, or importer to obtain the missing MSDS. A record of the contact must be maintained.